CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 1 August 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. El Ghali Benhima (Morocco)

GE.89-62874/1268a

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 522nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

My country has always attached special importance to disarmament. Today this importance is reflected in an initiative taken by His Majesty King Hassan II, who wished to mark Morocco's assumption of the presidency of this Conference formally by addressing a message to it. Consequently, I have the great honour to read it to you:

(continued in Arabic)

"On the occasion of Morocco's assumption of the presidency of your distinguished Conference during this month, we have pleasure in sending you this message to express the esteem that we feel for the ongoing efforts that you are making to achieve the objectives to which the international community is aspiring in the field of disarmament.

"The task entrusted to your Conference, as the sole international body assigned to conduct multilateral negotiations, is undoubtedly a major responsibility in view of the ramifications of disarmament issues and their close bearing on the questions of international security and development.

"No one can contest the extreme importance that all Governments, regardless of their political and economic ideologies, should attach to the question of the security of their peoples. However, this should not blind us to an equally important fact, the truth of which has been borne out by international experience in the field of disarmament, particularly during the last three decades, namely the evident fact that every advance in weapons technology increases the sense of uneasiness and the feeling that there is a need to acquire more weapons.

"This obvious fact should induce us to abandon the dictum that intensive armament is the best guarantee of the security of States and, consequently, should prompt us to seek not only arms control but also full and comprehensive disarmament.

"Quite apart from the fact that the volume of weaponry in the world has today reached a level which makes it impossible for any belligerent to gain a clear victory over his opponent, the devastation that would result from the use of the stockpiled weapons, and particularly nuclear, chemical and radiological weapons of mass destruction, places us under an obligation to avert the danger of extinction of the human race.

"We were delighted to learn that, at the Geneva summit conference in November 1985, the two super-Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, had mutually agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and therefore should never be fought.

(The President)

"We are aware of the technical complexities of disarmament negotiations, connected with the precise assessment of the various types of weapons in the possession of the parties and the verification measures needed to ensure respect for agreements in this field. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that a demonstration of political will by all the parties and the creation of a climate of mutual trust among them constitute the fundamental requirements for the removal of the obstacles impeding general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

"The agreement on intermediate-range missiles that was concluded in December 1987 between the United States of America and the Soviet Union offers cogent proof of the ability of the two parties to overcome many of the technical difficulties.

"In this connection, we wish to commend the endeavours made and the initiatives taken during the past four years. The resumption of negotiations between the two super-Powers on the reduction of strategic weapons and underground nuclear tests, as well as the negotiations on conventional arms in Vienna, the measures taken at the Stockholm Conference and the results of the work of the Madrid Conference within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, truly constitute important steps that have opened broad horizons and created a new dynamism which will have a positive effect in enhancing all international relations.

"It is our fervent hope that your Conference, which includes all international political tendencies, in addition to the five permanent members of the Security Council, will be able to take advantage of this new climate in the near future, since it now has no excuse to continue in the state of barrenness that has characterized its work during the last decade. Your Conference, which has formulated a realistic and positive 10-point programme, should certainly be able to achieve the progress that the international community expects of it.

"No one is unaware of the extent and importance of the material and human resources from which mankind could benefit as a result of the adoption of practical measures to halt the arms race and achieve disarmament. If we recall that more than $1,000 billion is spent every year on the arms race, we will be able to visualize the number of projects that could be implemented in all fields by diverting part of the resources released for the benefit of development.

"In our view, the concept of development includes helping the countries of the third world to overcome the various socio-economic problems with which they are beset, and averting all the dangers that are threatening the human race. Mankind is today waging a battle of a type that it has not previously known. The new epidemics that have begun to spread in many regions, in addition to the previously known epidemics that have not yet been totally eliminated, the impending environmental dangers and the multitude of social problems with which we are faced all constitute challenges that force us to take a broader view of security to encompass the health, intellectual and environmental security of mankind.

(The President)

"Accordingly, it is evident that the question of disarmament is a matter of concern to the whole world, since the continuation of the arms race would threaten the security of mankind and deprive it of extensive resources that could be used for purposes of development. This is why the international community has entrusted the United Nations with the central role and the primary responsibility in the field of disaramament. We are confident that, through concerted endeavours by all the parties, our Organization will be able to discharge this task in the most effective manner.

"In conclusion, we wish to affirm that our Kingdom, which had the honour to become a member of your distinguished Conference in 1979, is committed to a diligent and responsible endeavour, with the other members of the international community, to achieve full and comprehensive disarmament in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and in keeping with the programme of action contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

"We pray Almighty God to bless your work and grant you success in your endeavours."

(continued in French)

So reads the message sent by His Majesty King Hassan II to the members of this Conference.

As you know, today the host country is celebrating its national day: 1 August. On behalf of the Conference, I should like to express our sincere congratulations to the delegation which represents Switzerland in our Conference, and at the same time pass to it our wishes for prosperity. I would also like to thank our Swiss colleagues for the efficient way in which they perform their functions as hosts to the Conference.

I cannot begin my term of office without paying tribute, on your behalf, to my predecessors in the presidency during this session - Ambassadors Pugliese of Italy, Yamada of Japan, Bullut of Kenya, Robles of Mexico and Bayart of Mongolia. I hope they will take it as a mark of our consideration and our gratitude for the quality of their personal contributions to the work of this Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to request the delegation of Mexico, on behalf of all the members of the Conference, to pass to our most senior colleague, Ambassador García Robles, our wishes for a prompt recovery.

Taking up the presidency of the Conference is not only a heavy responsibility for the person occupying the Chair, but also an appeal, an appeal for support and co-operation from all the members. The collective motivation in the quest for necessary compromise and the commitment to accomplish a major undertaking together give me grounds for thinking that your support and your assistance will not be lacking. In this context, it will be agreed that agenda item 1, concerning a nuclear test ban, has the greatest call on our attention. Unfortunately, the consultations carried out by successive Presidents of the Conference, which are continuing actively through the efforts of Ambassador Yamada to identify the terms of a mandate for an

(The President)

ad hoc committee on this item, have not yet produced any results. It is true that divergences arise when the demands of some parties come up against the specific political preoccupations of others. In such circumstances dialogue and negotiation constitute the best path to the common goal. The readiness of the parties to acknowledge one another's positions and work together is a prerequisite for a fair solution to the difficulties. In this context, I wish to urge Ambassador Yamada to do his utmost to achieve a convergence of views on the mandate in question. It is my hope that, thanks to his wisdom, his efforts will be crowned with success. The Chair hastens to assure him of its readiness to assist at any time.

Other consultations are also to be held with the aim of seeking the most appropriate way for the Conference to tackle items 2 and 3, which deal respectively with nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. It seems to me that the Conference desires a speeding up of the negotiations on chemical weapons and the intensification of work on radiological weapons and outer space. The adoption of a report by the Ad hoc Committee on negative security assurances is a good omen for the other committees. Similarly, the Conference wishes finally to adopt the comprehensive programme of disarmament, in accordance with the recommendation set out in resolution 43/78 K. Since the Conference has on several occasions found it impossible to comply with the deadlines laid down by the General Assembly, it must do all in its power to secure the adoption of the programme at the end of this session.

There is no doubt that we are all aware of the need to accomplish our task, the extent of which no longer needs underlining, within the deadlines laid down. We are to adopt our report on Thursday 31 August, the date of the closure of the present session. We will all see to it that this imperative is respected. The Chair, which has taken the measure of the task with which it has been entrusted, is mobilized in the service of the Conference, which it assures of its availability and dedication. It knows that it can count on everyone to contribute to the success of our work. The support of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, and all the members of the secretariat will, I am sure, be most valuable.

Today the Conference begins its consideration of item 6 on its agenda, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", and item 7, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons". However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any representative who so wishes may raise any matter relating to the work of the Conference. I have no speakers on my list for today. However, in accordance with normal practice in the Conference, I shall ask whether there are any delegations wishing to take the floor. I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. OCHSNER (Switzerland) (translated from French): I thank you for your warm wishes addressed to my country on the occasion of our national day. I should also like to thank the Chairman of the committee on chemical weapons, Mr. Lüdeking of the Federal Republic of Germany, who, out of consideration for this day, has cancelled this afternoon's meeting, a gesture by a neighbour that we fully appreciate.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Switzerland for his kind words. Are there any other speakers who would like to take the floor? It seems not. I would like to inform the Conference that the Group of 21 has presented draft mandates for ad hoc committees under agenda item 2 entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", and item 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". The documents in question were distributed yesterday and today in the delegations' pigeon-holes in the official languages with the symbols CD/819/Rev.1 and CD/515/Rev.5. I should like to inform you that the Group of 21 has asked me to put these draft mandates before the Conference for decision. The Group of 21 has also asked me to begin with the draft relating to agenda item 2, contained in document CD/819/Rev.1, during next Thursday's plenary meeting. In keeping with our usual practice, I shall suspend the meeting after the speakers on the list have spoken, and convene an informal meeting to determine whether there is consensus on the proposed draft mandate. Immediately afterwards, as requested by the Group ov 21, we shall resume the plenary meeting so that the Conference officially has before it for decision the text issued with the symbol CD/819/Rev.1. The same procedure will be followed with the draft mandate under agenda item 3, contained in document CD/515/Rev.5, at the plenary meeting to be held on Tuesday 8 August.

There are no other matters to be considered today, and I now intend to close the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday 3 August 1989 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.